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MR. EMIL H. RICHTER, Curator of the Print Department, sailed from Boston on March 14 for several months' study of the Print Collections in England and on the Continent. The Museum is greatly indebted to those friends of the Department who have made possible Mr. Richter's trip.

IN THE JAPANESE ROOM there is being installed a special exhibition of Chinese and Japanese lacquer dating from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century. The examples will be arrranged as far as possible in chronological sequence. In the Japanese Corridor, at the west end, there will shortly be installed an exhibition of Buddhist stone sculpture dating from the sixth to the eighth century, illustrating the pure Chinese school, the so-called Greco-Indian school, and the subsequent union of the two influences. Near it will be placed an exhibition of Chinese bronze mirrors dating from the third century B. C. to the seventeenth century A. D. The centre of the Corridor will contain an exhibition of Chinese paintings dating from the twelfth to the sixteenth century.

THE FOLLOWING CONFERENCES WERE HELD at the Museum during March: March 5th, and again on March 10th, in the Bartlett Room, the Director of the Museum, Mr. Arthur Fairbanks, on "Athenian White Lekythoi." March 12th, and again on March 14th, in the Textile Gallery, Mr. Frank Gair Macomber on "Chinese Pottery." March 19th, and again on March 21st and March 24th, in the First Egyptian Room, Professor George F. Moore on "Egyptian Tombs and Burial Customs." March 26th, and again on March 28th, in the Japanese Cabinet, Mr. Okakura-Kakuzo on "Chinese and Japanese Mirrors." These Conferences conclude the series for the winter. The wide demand for admission and the interest which the participants have displayed and expressed have given gratifying evidence of the profit and pleasure the new opportunity has brought to a large number of persons. The Museum is grateful to the speakers for their fruitful coöperation.

A WHEEL-CHAIR IS NOW AT THE SERVICE of visitors wishing to spare themselves the fatigue of walking about the galleries. On giving notice at the desk at the entrance, an attendant will bring the chair, if not in use, and accompany the visitor about the Museum. This new provision for the comfort of visitors is the kind thought and gift of a friend, to whom the Museum desires to express its indebtedness. The use of wheel-chairs has become common in the World's Fairs of recent years, and, although the custom has not yet spread to museums, they offer like fatigues and likewise demand fresh attention.

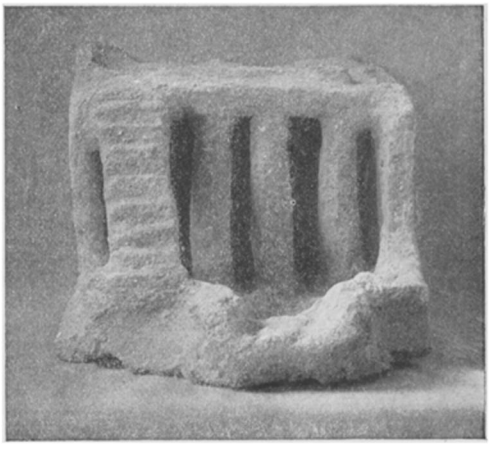
DURING THE SUMMER the Textile Room in the basement will be closed at 1 P. M. on Saturdays.

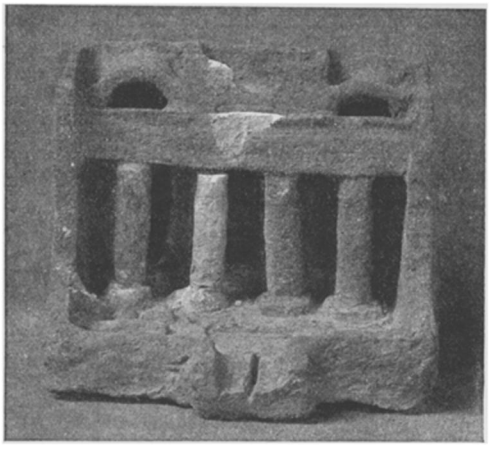
THE SERVICES OF THE DOCENTS have been rendered to 1,227 persons during the first quarter of 1908, nearly three times as many as during the last quarter of 1907. Many more persons have asked to see and talk over particular objects and special branches of the collections — in general, a much more rewarding use of time than the attempt to see many things.

Tray of Offerings
Dynasties IX-XII: circa 2000 B. C.

Egyptian "Soul-houses"

THE third Egyptian room contains two very interesting examples of the small objects called "Soul-houses" occasionally found in tombs of the Middle Empire. Although hardly works of fine art, they have much value for the student of Egyptian antiquities, on account at once of the part they played in the burial customs of the dwellers on the Nile and of the light they throw on Egyptian domestic architecture. They were usually placed on the top of graves with the purpose of affording shelter for the Ka or ghostly body. In very early times the Egyptians appeared to have followed the custom, common to many primitive peoples, of placing food upon graves. Later, the actual food was replaced by a clay model of a tray with food. The specimen reproduced at the head of this article is shown in the lower part of Case 56. The hole in the rim permitted the





libation of wine to run out upon the grave. Later still, a rude shed appears at one end of the tray, and finally, instead of the shed appear the structures shown in the accompanying illustrations, which in all probability fairly represent the houses of the middle class in Egypt. In one, stairs lead to the second story, the walls and columns of which have been broken away. The living apartments were on this floor, while the storeroom was below. The first story is interesting for its row of columns with bases like those in the Beni-Hassan tombs. The other specimen has two large "wind-conductors" or "mul-quf" on the roof, a water tank in front with holes for the four posts supporting the canopy which covered it, a drain from the water tank, and on the left in the courtyard modelled offerings such as a bull's head, etc. The present examples are a gift to the museum from the Egyptian Research Account, and date from the IX to XII dynasties of the Middle Empire (about 2,000 B. C.). They were found at Rifeh, a small village a few miles south of Assiut. Here a cemetery had been excavated in a gravel bank between the cliffs and the river. Gravel washed in over the graves by some of the storms that occur at long intervals in Egypt had preserved them nearly intact, and with them these "Soul-houses." L. E. R.

Circular of the Committee on the Museum Inviting Annual Subscriptions

THE Trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts gratefully acknowledge the subscriptions received during the past year for current expenses, and ask the public to renew this aid. While the gift of $10 constitutes the giver an Annual Subscriber of the Museum, a special request to subscribe $25, $100 or more is addressed to all who can respond to such an appeal. During 1907 annual subscriptions to the amount of $17,432 were received from 1,097 persons, of whom 279 contributed $9,307 in amounts larger than $10. The subscription exceeded that of any previous year excepting 1906, and it is the earnest hope of the Trustees that, on the eve of the large increase in expenses in moving to the new building, this cordial support may continue.

A review of the work of the year is to be found in the Annual Report, which is sent with this circular to former subscribers and to others who request it. The collections have been increased by gifts and purchases, new methods have been devised for making the objects displayed more intelligible to the public, and much time has been devoted to matters connected with the building now in process of erection. Never before has the Museum found greater recognition in this country and abroad, both for the excellence of its collections and for its success in making them useful to the community.

This appeal for funds is made in behalf of an institution which brings honor to the city. The maintenance properly falls, not alone on the few who can give largely to the collections, but on all who are interested in its work. It is hoped that very many who have not yet responded to the appeals for annual contributions will rally to the support of an enterprise that needs the constant and generous aid of all its well wishers.

Committee on the Museum :

Arthur Fairbanks. — *Francis Bartlett.*
William Sturgis Bigelow. — *Arthur T. Cabot.*
J. Templeman Coolidge, Jr. — *Francis L. Higginson.*
Gardiner M. Lane. — *A. W. Longfellow.*
Denman W. Ross.

Plans of the Galleries